



My blood's getting ready to flow. My fallopian tubes rumble. Don't annoy me. I'll explode. I'll jab my fingers into your eyeballs. I'll remove your scrotum. I'll bite you. I want to disappear. I drop my head. Tears drip off my cheeks. My brain pounds. Anything can set me off now.

The obnoxious teenagers squeal outside, playing their stupid sidewalk games. They bark like Chihuahuas whose tails are being cut off. They're disturbing my peace. They're disturbing my mind. I can't take it anymore, not another drop of it. I run to the window and howl out at them to shut up. They mimic me. At the top of my lungs I yell, "Shut up or I'll call the police!" I wring the life out of myself, I'm so upset.

I go to the store. Some pitiful stroker tries to pick me up. I'm not interested. I'm only interested in killing him. I scream at him, "Mind your own business or you'll get hurt!" He's startled. He drops his six-pack. It crashes to the floor. He runs into his mini-truck and peels out of the parking lot. Everyone turns around and looks at me like I'm a fruitcake.

A newborn male is shown on TV. I want to ram a hot curling iron up its asshole, then cut off its dick and testicles. I'd stomp on it, torture it, break its arms, twist off its neck, and toss the body off my roof. Then I'd sit down to a nice dinner. Macaroni and cheese.

Don't come near me! I'm drowning. I'm a puffy nervous wreck who's on the warpath. Keep away! Keep far, far away! I'm pissed off and I'll piss on you. I'll hit you like a Mack truck. I'll run you down. Get out of my way. I'm on the rag. It's the curse I pay for being born female.

I'm
on
the
RAG



A bloody fucking woman. Each month, it's a mess. I start losing my grip around the eleventh day after my last period ended. Fire streams out of my nostrils and asshole. You might say I'm very edgy. Within three or four days, my nerves are as burnt as truck-stop bacon. I go insane over the pettiest things. If there's a speck of dust hiding behind a flake of paint in a corner of the ceiling, I feel uneasy. I run around the apartment emptying ashtrays and garbage pails. I dust, make the bed, wash the kitchen floor, and vacuum. My patience evaporates. I lie down. My heart beats rapidly. I know I'm going to die.

But within seconds, I feel wonderful. I jump naked into the air.

All of a sudden, my emotions are smashed again. Retarded movies about love make me cry. I snap. I've gotten into thousands of arguments, given myself dozens of ridiculous haircuts, and entertained thoughts of suicide all because of PMS.

Five more days tick away in my cycle. The clouds surround and strangle me. The buildup of water around my midriff makes me look five months pregnant. I'm bloated. My cellulite swells. I look forty pounds heavier. It's quite unattractive. My body pulls me down. Give me sleep. I'm ready to clock out.

My head bleeds. It's split down the middle like a cashew. No matter how many aspirins I take, the throbbing doesn't go away. My stomach shakes like the earth beneath me. My body swells. The soles of my feet feel like they've been injected with lead. My spine is ready to snap. My tits are sore. I'm crabby. I'm horny. I piss every twenty minutes. My mood's black. I could go for some double-swirl-chocolate-fudge ice cream.

The day my blood-flood is due, I'm ready to be committed. I want to scream until my throat explodes. I want to beat somebody up. I want to put my fist through a window. There is no hope. Only ugliness. The world makes me cry and cry. Who invented life? The pain and pressure overwhelm me. I lie in my bed, counting the lines in the ceiling and looking for a way out.

Within moments, I feel giddy. A squirt comes out from between my legs. I reach down and wipe. My tissue's stained the color of rust. I run to the toilet. The water turns pink. Lordy Jesus, my friend is here. Unlike people, my period's reliable. It faithfully visits me every twenty-seven days. I call that a better friend than most people could be.

I was fourteen years old when my first *amigo de sangre* arrived. Blur! Blood was everywhere, seeping onto my bedsheets. I ran to fetch a sanitary napkin just as I had been instructed in a crackly old Girl Scouts film about menstruation. The blood represents that I'm a woman. I can reproduce. That's the scariest, most horrendous news I could ever hear.

But with each cycle, I've learned to understand my magical inner clock. Month after month, year after year, gallons of blood have poured out of me. So I've made peace with myself. I had no other choice than to bond with my menstrual river. When it's gushing, it reaffirms that I am childless, thus free. That's the best news I could ever hear.

My blood is beautiful. I've studied it. I've sniffed it. I've touched it. I've tasted it. I've smeared it across my nipples. I like my blood. It's a part of me which I like very, very much.



My flow starts out as shit-colored brownish-black but quickly changes to bright red. It takes five days to get all

the vaginal sewage out. My bladder's ready to pop open. Every hour I stick a fluffy new spark plug up my twat. With the wisdom of years, I've learned to do it right. When I was a teen, I used to stuff them up there sideways. But unlike most chicks, who let their tampons swell up until they're like a janitor's mop, I like to keep it clean. Nevermore will my blood bubble its way through my rag and leave telltale stains on items of apparel.

As my crotch keeps spewing red garbage, I start getting clots. That's when the real fun begins. Each time I feel a cramp, I know I've passed a clot. Some of my clots are the size of small amphibians. Cramps wrack my body and remind me that I'm alive. It's nature's way of saying it's mad that I'm not fertilizing my eggs. That's nature's problem. I fall asleep.

I'm in for an early morning treat when I pull out the graveyard-shift tampon.



My clots look like slices of raw liver from a Cleveland meat market. I stare at the spongy hemoglobin, the hellish, oily cunt-resin. "This came out of me?" I wonder.

Over the next couple of days, my blood drips slower, until it's like the last dribbly gasps from a Mr. Coffee machine. Maybe a few red dots in my urine, nothing major. Best wishes until next month, *mon soeur*.

But it ain't over yet. When the haggard old witch named menopause takes command of my body, my insides will dry up like a corn husk. It's hard to believe, but I'll be even crankier. I'll pack on another twenty, thirty pounds. I'll bitch about leg cramps and hot flashes. Varicose veins will split open all over my ankles. My snatch will be the texture of tire rubber. I'll walk down the street, talking to myself. I'll terrorize small children. I'll contract an incurable disease. I'll suffer, then die. But at least I'll be off the rag. ■